

**SUMMARY OF NORTH GEORGIA
REGIONAL TRUCK LANE USER TASK FORCE MEETING**

**GDOT Truck Lane Needs Identification Study – May 7, 2007
Northwest Georgia Trade and Convention Center – Dalton, Georgia**

The second North Georgia Truck Lane Users Task Force Meeting for the GDOT Truck Lane Needs Identification Study was held at the Northwest Georgia Trade and Convention Center in Dalton, GA on May 7, 2007 beginning at approximately 1:05 PM. Matthew Fowler, GDOT Planning, welcomed the group. He turned the floor over to Andrew Smith, Consultant Project Manager for HNTB. The group made self-introductions. The following individuals attended the meeting:

Name	Company	Phone	E-Mail
Kevin Currie	Rosedale Transport	706-226-1003	kcurrie@rosedaletransport.com
Ray Poarch	All American Xpress	706-226-6776	raypoarch@yahoo.com
Frank Sullivan	Southeastern Freight Lines	706-277-1889	frank.sullivan@sefl.com
John Lane	Southeastern Freight Lines	706-463-0234	john.lane@sefl.com
Johnny Davis	Southeastern Freight Lines	706-277-1889	Johnny.davis.com
Matthew Fowler	GDOT	--	matthew.fowler@dot.state.ga.us
Michelle Caldwell	GDOT	--	michelle.caldwell@dot.state.ga.us
Tom McQueen	GDOT	--	tom.mcqueen@dot.state.ga.us
Andrew Smith	HNTB	404-946-5700	asmith@hntb.com
Claudia Bilotto	HNTB	404-946-5700	cbilotto@hntb.com
Kelly Burnes	HNTB	404-946-5700	kburnes@hntb.com
Mark Cutler	Cambridge Systematics	--	mcutler@camsys.com

Study Update

Mr. Smith discussed the agenda and gave an overview of today's meeting. He then explained that a video with 3-D animation was created to help people visualize the truck only lanes concept. The video was then played.

After the video, Mr. Smith continued with the PowerPoint presentation. He touched on the Guiding Principles of the study. At this point, Marc Cutler was then introduced to talk about the data collection.

Mr. Cutler presented a congestion summary for 2035. He stated that by building truck lanes, we are making a measurable difference on congestion. Modal diversion is important in easing congestion. At more than 500 miles, rail becomes an attractive alternative for shipping, but investment is needed in both systems.

Mr. Cutler introduced the key candidate segments were moved forward to Phase 2. The number one segment was the corridor segment of I-75 between Chattanooga and Macon. Truck lanes also appear to have merit in Savannah.

Mr. Smith then discussed the next steps of the study and asked if there were any questions.

Questions

Kevin Currie asked about access, expressing that is a large consideration. He said open access is needed to truck lanes can that you can't expect to get on and off at every exit. Dalton and Cartersville are important truck exits.

Mr. Smith responded by saying that specific, strategic locations for trucks to get in and out will be looked at. Truck lanes give trucks the advantage to sitting in congestion.

Mr. Currie went on to inquire about creating a happy situation for truckers; will there be special service plazas to accommodate truckers?

Mr. Smith responded that there may be some special plazas, but that access will be provided to all amenities currently on the ground.

Ray Poarch asked if there were an incident or an accident, would there be an alternate route for the truck only lane?

Mr. Smith said that is a big consideration and that this will be incorporated into the design. We will manage the facility best way we can and provide information to users if there is an accident, security, or evacuation issue.

Mr. Poarch had another question about freight tonnage; if using the truck only lane would allow the weight carried on the truck to be increased?

Matthew Fowler replied that there have been discussions on this at the national level and currently the weight of the truck cannot be increased east of the Mississippi River. Mr. Smith added that the system will be designed specifically for trucks. We may need to rebuild weigh stations in 2030 or 2050.

Mr. Currie mentioned that we still have steel trucks. Mr. Smith responded that that was a good question and that we may redesign new weigh stations for truck only lanes.

Mr. Poarch asked about an East-West corridor off I-59 to I-285? Mr. Smith stated that this study is only considering existing facilities, but new facilities may be looked at by the DOT in other studies.

Mr. Currie asked about the cost for a truck to travel from Chattanooga to Macon? Mr. Smith said we are nowhere near estimating costs. Right now we are looking at how we best move truck traffic.

Mr. Currie stated that truck only lanes would be a good thing for deliveries, safety, and time savings.

Mr. Smith mentioned to the group that there were some maps in the back of the room and that the attendees should feel free to mark where truck only access locations should be.

Mr. Currie asked if truck only lanes have been implemented anywhere else in the country. Mr. Smith replied that GDOT is on the cutting edge with this study and that few other places are investigating truck only lanes. He mentioned that Florida is looking at truck only lanes in Tampa.

Mr. Currie asked if there were any examples in Europe? Mr. Smith stated that Europe is more ahead of us and that Germany is probably doing the most. They are more accustomed to user fees and charging people and so are further ahead of us on this front.

Mr. Cutler mentioned the New Jersey Turnpike does have a sort of truck lane system in that they have a separated facility for trucks, but cars are also able to travel in this lane.

Mr. Smith mentioned truck only lanes can be found where there is port activity; for instance at the Port of Long Beach, there is a broad network of truck only lanes.

John Lane asked if the Port to the interstate was a big issue for the truck only lanes? Mr. Smith answered that most truck trips make intermediate stops at warehouses and distribution centers.

Mr. Lane continued saying that truckers need a place to rest and park that more of this is needed and it's a big concern. Mr. Smith responded by saying that as part of this study, a parking analysis was completed. We found that we have enough parking, but it's not being used, that access to is a problem.

Mr. Currie said that trying to find parking at the 5-6 PM hour is more of a problem. Mr. Poarch added that if you're not there to park by 5 PM that it's a big problem.

Mr. Lane said that it's hard to get through a rest area at midnight. He said there are few places at truck stops also. Mr. Currie added that Atlanta didn't have truck stops in the early 1970's and that there are very few commercial truck facilities in the Atlanta area.

Frank Sullivan mentioned the I-75/I-575 article in the paper and asked if the \$4 billion project was even going to be cost feasible when we get there? Mr. Smith responded that inflation is figured in, it's figured in a lot of different projects but costs are growing tremendously. Building truck only lanes in existing right-of-way is a huge cost savings.

Mr. Lane stated that we should put trucks in HOV lanes.

Mr. Smith stated that costs are on every DOT official's mind.

Mr. Sullivan questioned that if we don't do something, what will gridlock be like in the future?

Mr. Poarch said it will come down to time of day to unload or load trucks. Sometimes you have to leave 4 hours early to get to your destination.

Mr. Smith said this is what is meant by our reliability factor – planning what time you leave to get to your destination at a certain time. Truck only lanes should go a long way to ease congestion and that the lanes should be much more reliable than the corridor as a whole.

Mr. Currie mentioned that from a time management standpoint, this is key. It isn't a question of if there will be an issue, but where.

Mr. Smith asked the group if their travel routes ever involve the west side. Most people we talked to said they used 75 to get to West 285.

Mr. Sullivan stated that the 75/85 corridor is horrible and that it will be tougher in the future.

Mr. Currie asked in real time, when will TOL be on the ground?

Mr. Smith responded that 2015 is an aggressive schedule for the I-75/I-575 article, but that's years ahead of where we are.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.